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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000618

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/ANP/RICCI AND EB/BOBO
USDA FOR FAS/ITP/CLAUS AND MIRELES, FAS/BIG/WILLIAMS, AND
FAS/FAA/YOUNG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND POSITION AT CODEX AD HOC TASK FORCE
ON BIOTECHNOLOGY

REF: SECSTATE 147159

1. Summary: New Zealand will participate in the fifth Session of the Codex Ad-Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology (Task Force) in Chiba, Japan September 19-23, 2005. New Zealand will be generally supportive of U.S. positions. New Zealand agrees with the United States that the Task Force should focus on the development of international science-based guidance for foods derived from modern biotechnology that is relevant to the health of consumers and the promotion of fair practices in the food trade. New Zealand further agrees with the United States that the work of the Task Force should not include safety assessments of crops developed as non-food products and that issues such as labeling and the environment should be excluded from its scope of work. New Zealand will place a priority on work related to transgenic animals. It recognizes the importance of the U.S. work proposals shared per reftel and looks forward to considering U.S. priorities as well as those submitted by other Codex members. End Summary

2. The New Zealand delegation to the Chiba meeting will include Dr. Graeme King, Manager Innovation Policy, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and Dr. Paul Dansted, Principal Adviser (chemicals), New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

3. New Zealand will propose work on transgenic animals (including fish) as its only priority work area for the Task Force. New Zealand finds acceptable the U.S. suggestion that work proceeding in this area follow a step-wise approach. This approach would be based on available science and capability to develop an appropriate international guidance text, with clear decision points on proceeding with additional work. New Zealand agrees with the U.S. view that work by the Task Force on such a project should first identify elements of the existing Guidelines that are relevant to food from recombinant-DNA animals. This would be followed by the identification of additional concepts that are relevant to the safety assessment of foods derived from recombinant-DNA animals, and any topics that might require additional scientific input.

4. New Zealand seeks additional clarification on the U.S. work proposal related to food safety issues specific to staple food crops for developing countries. New Zealand appreciates the importance of including in the Task Force's work agenda issues of importance to developing countries and requests information regarding specific crops to be considered.

5. New Zealand recognizes the importance to the United States of including work related to low-level presence in food of plant material derived from recombinant-DNA plants. It is, however, not a priority work area for New Zealand. New Zealand anticipates receiving additional documentation being prepared by the United States on its proposal and will give it careful consideration.

6. New Zealand concurs with the U.S. assessment that the consideration of work by the Task Force related to animal clones is not appropriate. Work related to plants expressing bioactive substances or nutritionally enhanced plants is not a priority for New Zealand. New Zealand generally supports U.S. views regarding this subject as conveyed in reftel, but is willing to consider positions and work priorities in this area promoted by other countries. New Zealand generally agrees with the U.S. position regarding work on plants with stacked genes, but again will carefully consider positions of other countries regarding this potential work area. New Zealand shares the U.S. view that work proposals related to biopharming/plants expressing pharmaceutical or other non-food substances do not fall within the mandate of the Task Force.

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